

A CHILD'S CAPE COAT

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Your Petitioners, JOI MAHON, a citizen of the United States and resident of the State of Iowa, whose post office address is 4614 Polk Street, Sioux City, Iowa 51108, and LEEANN M. FOWLER, a citizen of the United States and resident of the State of Wisconsin, whose post office address is E1000 3A Trout Road, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin 53965, pray that Letters Patent may be granted to them for the invention set forth in the following specification.

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CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

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This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/456,862 entitled A CHILD'S CAPE COAT filed March 24, 2003, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to clothing for children and, more particularly, to a coat for a child that is quickly and easily assembled around the child rather than sliding the child's head or arms through narrow apertures in the coat.

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2. DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

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Children and infants can be difficult to clothe at times. Narrow openings, such as those frequently found within sleeves and neck holes of garments become difficult targets while the child flails its arms and wiggles about. Moreover, the child has to be rolled from side to side or partially, if not totally, elevated from the table or floor in order to properly clothe the child in the garment. More times than not, the child is difficult to

maneuver leading to further difficulty and frustration

1 Various prior art garments have been designed in an effort to simplify the
process of clothing a child or infant. In U.S. Patent No. 3,568,213 Mason discloses a
garment for an infant that incorporates a pair of upper and lower garments into a single
article of clothing that can be placed on the infant simultaneously. However, the general
5 design of Mason's garment pattern is fairly complex in its geometry, when
manufacturing considerations, such as sizing, are considered. This leads to increases
in manufacturing costs and decreases the garment's ease of use by the consumer.
Moreover, Mason's design fails to provide for adequate limb coverage, thus decreasing
10 its available uses.

In U.S. Patent No. 4,257,127, Kaupin, et al., discloses an infant garment that
also incorporates upper and lower garments to increase the speed and ease of clothing
the child. The Kaupin, et al design improves upon the Mason design to the extent that
15 the Kaupin, et al. design provides better limb coverage for the child. However, the
Kaupin, et al. design is more complex than the Mason design and is more difficult to
assemble, thus departing the goals of simplicity and ease of use. Such is the case for a
similar design of children's garment, disclosed in U. S. Patent No. 4,726,076, by Douez.

Few children's clothing designs can be found within the prior art that are both
20 simple in geometry and easy to use when clothing a child. One example of a prior art
children's jacket is U.S. Patent No. 4,304,007, by Ito. The Ito garment is fabricated
using a body blank and two separate gusset blanks. The gusset blanks are specifically
25 kite-shaped and are coupled to the geometric design of the body blank to form the

jacket. Due to its geometric design that requires the use of separate component panels,
1 Ito fails to achieve a garment that is easy to use while remaining simple in design.

Accordingly, what is needed is a child's garment that is simple in design and
increases the ease with which a child can be clothed.

5 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The child's garment of the present invention is provided with a generally circular
body blank, having a neck opening, a front portion, a rear portion and opposite sleeve
portions. Two pairs of side slits extend radially, inward from the peripheral edge of the
body blank, toward the neck opening. Each slit defines a lateral edge of both a sleeve
10 and either the front or rear portion of the body blank. A single elongated slit is formed in
the front portion of the body blank to form separate right and left halves of the front
portion. Securement means are provided adjacent each of the slits to selectively secure
the lateral edge portions to one another for selective formation of the sleeves and body
15 of the garment.

Optional mittens are provided in the form of two pocket-shaped members, which
are each formed using a single piece of material. The mittens may be secured to the
underside of each opposing sleeve blank and receive the child's hands when the
garment is in use. Similarly, a hood may be provided in a simple geometric shape that
permits removable engagement with the neck opening in the body of the garment.
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In use, the garment is quickly and easily assembled around the child using a brief
series of folding maneuvers. The sleeves and body of the garment are assembled while
the child lies on the inner surface of the rear panel. Accordingly, the simple design
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1 allows the garment to be placed on the child without struggling to find the sleeves with
the child's arms or forcing the child's head through a narrow neck opening.

5 It is therefore one of the principle objects of the present invention to provide a
child's garment that is easy assembled around the child with minimal manipulation of
the child or its appendages.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a child's garment that is
comprised of a single, seamless panel of material.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a child's garment that is
versatile and simple to use.

10 Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a child's garment that
can be used to clothe a child quickly and easily, even while the child is moving its arms
and legs about.

15 Still another object of the present invention is to provide a cape coat, having a
simple geometric design that is simple and relatively inexpensive to manufacture.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a child's garment that
has integral mitten and hood portions, which can be selectively used or removed from
the garment.

20 These and other objects of the present invention will be apparent to those of skill
in the art.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is an isometric view of one embodiment of the garment of the present
invention as the same could be assembled and combined with optional mitten and hood

1 portions;

Figure 2 is an isometric view of the garment of Figure 1 in a generally
disassembled form; and

5 Figure 3 is a plan view of one embodiment of a pattern from which components
of the garment depicted in Figures 1 and 2 could be derived.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The garment 10 of the present invention is generally depicted in Figures 1 and 2.
While the garment 10 will be described and depicted herein as a child's garment, it will
be clear to those of skill in the art that the garment could be made for individuals of any
10 age, ranging from infancy to adulthood. Moreover, while the garment 10 is described as
a cape coat, it should also be understood that the term "cape coat" is used by way of
example and not by limitation as various articles of clothing and outerwear may be
interchangeable with one another while being known by one or more different names.

15 The garment 10 is generally provided with a body blank 12 formed from nearly
any flexible material that is preferred, depending on the intended use. The body blank
12 is formed to have a front panel 14, a rear panel 16, a first sleeve blank 18 and a
second opposing sleeve blank 20. A neck opening 22 is centrally formed within the
body blank 12. A peripheral edge portion 24 generally defines the shape of the body
20 blank 12. It is preferred that the peripheral edge portion 24 have a generally curved
shape. While it is contemplated that circular, elliptical, ovular, and other such curved
shapes would suffice in the design of the garment 10, it is also contemplated that

1 shapes having a plurality of flattened sides, such as hexagons, octagons, and the like
will fit within the realm of useable "curved" shapes.

5 A series of four side slits 26 are formed into the body blank 12 and extend inwardly from the peripheral edge portion 24 toward the neck opening 22. The side slits 26 are preferably disposed with respect to one another so that each slit defines at least one lateral edge 28 of either the first sleeve blank 18 or second sleeve blank 20 and a lateral edge 30 of the front panel 14 or a lateral edge portion 32 of the rear panel 16. A front slit 34 is preferably formed in the front panel 14 to extend outwardly from the neck opening 22. It is preferred that the front slit 34 extend through the peripheral edge portion 24 in order to separate the front panel 14 into opposing right and left portions.
10 However, it is contemplated that the front slit 34 may extend only partially toward the peripheral edge portion 24, when an open-front garment 10 is not desirable.

15 The side slits 26 and the front slit 34 are preferably provided with securement means 36 so that the opposing lateral edges 28 of the first and second sleeve blanks 18 and 20 can be selectively coupled to one another to form a first sleeve 38 and second sleeve 40 of the garment 10. Similarly, securement means 36 will be provided adjacent the lateral edge portions of the front panel 14 and rear panel 16 so that they may be selectively coupled to one another to form the body 42 of the garment 10. It is
20 contemplated that nearly any known securement systems in the art could be used for the securement means 36, such as buttons, snaps, zippers, hook and eye combinations or hook and loop material such as Velcro.

Where desirable, optional mitten means 44 may be coupled first and second
1 sleeve blanks 18 and 20 to receive the child's hands when the garment 10 is being
worn. As depicted in Figure 2, first and second mittens 46 and 48 can be coupled to the
under side 50 of the body blank 12, proximate the first and second sleeve blanks 18 and
5 20. It is contemplated that the first and second mittens 46 and 48 could be permanently
secured to the garment 10 using stitching, adhesives, and the like. However, the first
and second mittens 46 and 48 can optionally be provided in a removable fashion using
a securement means similar to those identified previously as securement means 36.

An optional hood 52 could be provided for selectively covering the child's head
10 when the garment 10 is used. The hood 52 is preferably coupled with the inner edge
portion 54 of the neck opening 22. Depending on the intended use of the garment 10,
the hood 52 could be permanently secured to the inner edge portion 54 or removably
secured using a securement means similar to those identified previously as securement
means 36.
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In use, the garment 10 is easily applied around a child without excessive
manipulation of the child or its appendages with respect to the changing surface or the
garment 10. Preferably, the garment 10 is first arranged flat on top of a changing
surface with each of the securement means 36 being unsecured. The child is then
20 placed on the undersurface 50 of the garment 10 with its head adjacent the neck
opening 22. The front panel 14 is folded onto the front of the child, causing the child's
head to be gently and easily pass through the neck opening 22. The securement
means 36 at the lateral edges 30 and 32 of the front panel 14 and rear panel 16 are
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then coupled to one another, thus forming the body 42 of the garment 10 around the
1 child. The first and second sleeves 46 and 48 are formed in a similar manner by
coupling the securement means 36 at the lateral edges 28 and 28' of the first and
second sleeve blanks 18 and 20 around the child's arms. In this manner, the garment
5 10 is quickly and easily secured around the child with minimal effort or frustration.

Figure 3 depicts a pattern from which components of the garment 10 could be
derived, using a single panel of fabric 56. The generally circular body blank 12 is
depicted as previously described. First and second mitten blanks 58 and 60 are
provided as single elongated pieces of material, which can be easily folded upon
10 themselves and secured to form the first and second mittens 46 and 48. A rear panel
62 and top panel 64 are depicted as one possible embodiment of the design for the
hood 52, depicted in Figure 2.

In the drawings and in the specification, there have been set forth preferred
15 embodiments of the invention and although specific items are employed, these are used
in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for purposes of limitation. Changes in
the form and proportion of parts, as well as a substitution of equivalents, are
contemplated as circumstances may suggest or render expedient without departing
20 from the spirit or scope of the invention as further defined in the following claims.

Thus it can be seen that the invention accomplishes at least all of its stated
objectives.